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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on the employment need for catalogers as perceived by library science students and practicing library administrators. Library literature provided several contradictory views on whether there is or is not a significant need for catalogers today; and, if there is, whether entry level catalogers or those with experience are in demand. The study consisted of two populations, one of library science students enrolled in five northeastern library schools and the other library administrators in different types of libraries in New York City. The data were gathered using questionnaires. Cataloging was indicated as a first choice by only 5.4% of the surveyed library science students. A large percentage (37%) indicated that they thought there were no cataloging jobs available. Only 6% said they would immediately accept a cataloging position if it were offered. The administrators indicated that they were not having difficulty in finding or maintaining an adequate professional cataloging staff either because financial pressures precluded the addition of new staff (35%) or because their current staff fulfilled their library's need. About 30% of the administrators required at least one year's experience and 30% were willing to accept entry level catalogers along with more experienced applicants. Questionnaires sent to students and administrators are appended. (Contains 30 references.) (KRN)

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THE STATUS OF CATALOGERS IN THE FIELD OF LIBRARIANSHIP

A Master's Research Paper submitted to the
Kent State University School of Library and Information Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Master of Library Science

by

Renee Schwarz

May, 1993

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A library without a cataloger may be as difficult to perceive as a hospital without a nurse. Presumably, neither of the above will ever come to pass, but recent technological advances together with population changes have merged to produce conditions which are potentially threatening to the future of cataloging and, more immediately, to current library science students who may be contemplating this branch of librarianship as a career.

The position of entry-level cataloger appears to be in a catch-22. Surveys indicate that fewer students are taking cataloging.[1] On the other hand, the job of cataloging has been redefined and the new tasks are of a nature that would not be held by a recent graduate from library school. What are they to do, those who are emerging from a library school with a Master of Library Science (MLS) degree and a desire to work in this specialty? Are there any positions for them? Can only the experienced cataloger work in the specialty as it is now?

The view from the other side of this dichotomous situation was also considered. Why are there fewer students? Recent demographic changes causing some concern reveal that

there were fewer children born to the "baby boom" generation and thus a naturally lower supply of potential candidates for library school in general, and a proportionally smaller number for any branch of librarianship, such as cataloging. Two more questions needed to be addressed here. 1. Why are those fewer remaining students choosing cataloging? 2. What is there about the newly defined cataloger's job that makes it difficult for an entry level cataloger, e.g., a recent graduate to obtain? The preceding queries were instrumental in establishing a basis for the research problem that is presented in this paper.

Research studies on the shortage of catalogers have not been prevalent. Kenneth Furuta did a study that was related to the shortage of catalogers, through analysis of job advertisements.[2] The most current attempt to directly address the situation was the Symposium at Simmons College, in March of 1989.[3] Discussions, including advice and proposals, took place. It was a heuristic and not a scientific study. In 1985, the Cataloging and Classification Section (CCS) of the American Library Association (ALA) formed a task force to study the issues.[4] Even though the CCS study was scientific, and the scope was broad, the year was 1985, and the recent economic situation plus other variables interceded in the intervening years to have created an environment which called for a new study.

At the 1988 Midwinter Placement Center only sixty-five applicants expressed interest in 133 available positions.[5] On the other hand, other authors in the literature warn of an expected phasing out of cataloging positions.[6] What was the actual situation with respect to cataloging positions in 1992?

Purpose

This paper attempted to discover whether there is a shortage of catalogers and, more specifically, to determine what the shortage represents, i.e., a lack of qualified, experienced catalogers or a lack of applicants at any level of experience, for the position of professional cataloger. A second objective was to determine the rationale behind the library students' decisions and the perspectives of library administrators.

Definitions of Terms

Academic library. A library of or in a university, a four-year liberal arts college, a technical institution, or a community college.

Cataloger. An individual who performs cataloging duties and who holds a Master of Library Science degree, i.e., a professional cataloger.

Cataloging courses. Courses taken in the Library and Information Science program leading to an MLS degree, and including Organization of Library Materials, Serials Cataloging, and Descriptive Cataloging. Not all of these are included in every library school program. Some schools require none and some offer more.

Entry level cataloger. A Professional cataloger who has recently graduated from library school and/or who is new to this branch of librarianship.

Public library. A library that is operated by a city, county, or other governmental subdivision.

Special library. A library that is operated by and for a private and/or commmercial establishment.

Technical Services Department. The department of a library that includes cataloging, selections, and acquisitions.

Limitations of Study

This study was confined to the Northeastern section of the United States, as defined by the American Library Association. Therefore, the findings are not necessarily generalizable to the status of cataloging in other geographic areas.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Robert Holley viewed the problem from a budgetary perspective.[7] His implication seemed to be that since technical services are a significant part of the library's budget, and with the acquisition flow determining the size of that department, a large library, public or academic, would hold more promise for cataloger applicants. Holley did not foresee a positive outlook for the cataloger. He predicted that this branch of librarianship will diminish in numbers, the duplication of tasks will be reduced, and the surviving catalogers will fall into four groups: (1) catalogers at the Library of Congress who will realize the least change, (2) Catalogers in large research libraries and special collections, (3) Catalogers as managers and planners, and (4) Small groups of librarians who perform selection, cataloging, acquisitions and reference as integrated functions. A high level of competence will be needed from all catalogers, with a good subject knowledge and strong bases in library science. Additional apprenticeships will be needed if this individual is to be manager and the only degreed librarian on the staff. If efficiency is a major consideration as noted by Holley, employment of entry level catalogers will be at a

disadvantage. In his discussion of cost benefit, Holley also indicated that the imperfectly processed book is more available than the uncataloged book in the backlog. In other words, it would be preferable to have an entry level cataloger imperfectly process a book and, by so doing, it would be accessible to users. While this statement might be viewed as a reason to hire entry level catalogers, Holley does qualify it in his article.

Lizbeth Bishoff arrived at a conclusion similar to that of Holley's, i.e., redefinition of tasks.[8] However, her outlook was of a positive nature. She further defined the chance for professional cataloging to include new tasks, such as systems analysis, thereby implementing the need for planning, communication and coordinating skills. Perhaps, in answer to those negative preconceptions of a cataloger, Bishoff states that library science students must be informed that catalogers do need to be able to communicate effectively, and that skill is not reserved exclusively for the reference librarian.

One aspect of a cataloging job includes an evaluative device that may cause some unease and apprehension, i.e., quantity control, or the need to maintain a specific level of production (number of items to be cataloged). Although its practice in the library milieu may not be known among library students, at the same time, it may not be universally accepted with pleasure by practicing catalogers who also know that other librarians do not have such production standards

by which they are evaluated.[9] This may be an inference by Bolin that one must look internally for part of the cause of the cataloger shortage.[10]

Barnett addressed the cataloger's need for knowledge in rare books, music, foreign languages, maps and serials.[11] She also restated a concern voiced to her by a library school educator that you cannot go into depth in a regular fifteen-week course. This problem plus the market employment situation, she contends, are more instrumental in the cataloger shortage than are the technological intricacies. Barnett also agreed with Janet Swan Hill who believes that cataloging can be fun, but this aspect of cataloging is not being fostered in library school and neither is the opportunity to challenge the intellectual growth of the students.[12]

Janet Swan Hill, in her discussion of the role, supply, and education of catalogers, has stated that the cataloging field as a whole might be in danger of fadeout.[13] Four given reasons for this premise include a fear of being obliterated, the threat of automation, inadequate preparation, and recruitment difficulties.[14]

Another aspect of recruitment, choice of specialization was surveyed by White and Mort who found that while only an insignificant number of students originally wanted to be catalogers, several more accepted such a job upon graduating.[15] This change was attributed by Mort and White to either an encouragement by faculty or because of actual job offerings that were available. The authors further

support the above finding by their claim that the shortage of graduating librarians accepting catalogers' positions is due to those entry level catalogers' preconceived notions of the position prior to entering library school, and that, in actuality, the number of entry level catalogers is growing.

Hill also communicated a concern for those preconceptions of library students.[16] Her concern is extended to the long-range period and the loss of talented librarians to other career opportunities. She noted three reasons she thought were behind the lack of recruits. They are: (1) the new opportunities for capable women in lucrative professions; (2) new opportunities in special libraries in the private sector, and (3) the attitude toward cataloging that the students in library school are absorbing.

The Heads of Cataloging Discussion Group at the mid-winter ALA Conference in 1985 focused their meeting on the lack of applicants for entry level cataloging positions in all kinds of libraries in the United States. The reasoning behind this focus was considered by Laurie E. Smith in her article, "Where Are the Entry Level Catalogers?"[17]

One concern addressed the dwindling supply of graduates from the library schools which in turn is a consequence of the lower birth rate of the post baby boom generation. Even though this situation is applied here to the library field in general, it seems safe to deduce that if there are less applicants for all types of library positions, there will be fewer for a particular library specialty.

Salaries are a significant factor in recruitment. As pointed out by Smith,[18] who referred to Van House[19] and to the 1984 ALA salary survey,[20] the figures indicated that in a range from lowest to highest amounts for entry level catalogers and experienced ones, the mean is closest to the beginning entry level. In the 1991 ALA Survey Report, the status of the cataloger's salary was just one item below the median in an array of eight positions.[21] In that table the top two positions were Director and Assistant Director, respectively. This in itself would not appear discouraging. However, the figures are for the mean of all catalogers (from all academic and public libraries, and from all regions). The number for the first quartile is again much closer (by about $10,000) to the starting range than the third quartile figure is to the top of the range, approximately $40,000. There appears to be both hope and at the same time discouragement from these figures. Hope, in that if one gains experience and obtains a position in a favorable situation in a favorable location, the financial remuneration is very encouraging. However, for the beginning cataloger, the lower range of salaries leaves much for which to work.

Climate was recognized by the experienced professional librarians at the midwinter conference as a factor in enlisting recruits. The libraries in the "snow belt" areas experienced recruitment shortages that the libraries in the warm and sunny areas did not absorb.[22]

Smith also addressed the effect of automation and the redefinition of cataloging tasks on attracting new catalogers.[23] A loss of prestige is taking place as tasks are turned over to paraprofessionals. She reiterated the theory expressed by Holley that a cataloger should possess substantial knowledge of cataloging rules and basic library science principles.

In a written questionnaire in 1983, followed by a telephone interview three years later Patricia Eskoz tried to measure organizational patterns in catalog departments in approximately 160 academic libraries in the United States.[24] In the 1983 questionnaire, one issue looked into cataloging networks. The findings indicated a slight decrease (five per cent) in the number of professional catalogers, and a small increase in the amount of support personnel. Surprisingly, the telephone interviews three years later revealed a stabilizing of staff size. Although some of the author's colleagues had predicted a decline of cataloger positions just prior to the initiation of her research, the results showed less decrease in positions than had been expected.

By 1986 there were even some shortages, but Eskoz did not believe that this particular branch of librarianship experienced much growth.

Furuta also wrote on the impact automation had on staffing the catalog department.[25] As more duties were being given to support staff there was less need for professionals. But the difficult items which remained required qualified

catalogers for whom a shortage developed. Furuta also mentioned that the shortage affected the job advertisements for catalogers. His study included an analysis of the advertisements for catalogers. The time frame for his study extended from 1970 through 1989. Furuta noted that the data did not reflect an accurate picture of the job market due to the profusion of listings for administrative jobs. Furuta's reasoning was that there were not many qualified candidates to fill such a post in that local area. Thus, a search on a national scale was needed. Although this would seemingly have little interest or application for recent graduates from library schools, it would point out that libraries will conduct an extensive search to fill top-of-the-range positions. Another interesting finding was that the academic libraries accounted for 84.05% of the non-administrative advertisements. Furuta stated that a similar finding was made by a task force of a division of the ALA.[26]

Contrary to Holley, Smith, Swan and others who discussed new supervisory functions for professional catalogers, Furuta did not find such to be true after 1984.[27] He also refuted the idea, through his findings, that the future role of the cataloger was a holistic one. His conclusion seemed to be a denial of the findings. His rationale was based on the uncontrolled variable of advertisements themselves and the type of library that places advertisements. One example given was that if less catalogers were needed there would

be less postings. The reverse occurred. There were more postings due to a lack of qualified catalogers.[20]

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The survey served as the basic methodology for this study. Two different populations were used, library administrators and library science students. The sample from the student population consisted of the individuals enrolled in the Summer 1992 library science programs at Queens College, City University of New York; University of Rhode Island; Rutgers University; Southern Connecticut State University; and Kent State University, Kent, Ohio, the school where the research project was undertaken. The administrative sample was composed of seventeen library administrators from libraries in the New York City metropolitan area, encompassing academic and special libraries. The number of units in the student sample was 333.

The criterion for selection of the schools was accreditation of their library science program by the American Library Association, under STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION, 1992, and maintained according to most recent site visits.

The New York City area was chosen for the administrative sample for the following reasons: (1) an extensive and diversified array of libraries, (2) the existence of several library school programs, and (3) a potential for job opportunities in the cataloging field due to the preponderance

of libraries that have the capacity for cataloging facilities.

Questionnaires were mailed to the samples, and, in the case of the students, were also distributed to their mailboxes in their respective library schools. Two different versions of the questionnaires were used, one for the students and another for the administrators. The responses were returned via self-addressed stamped envelopes.

The content of the student version was designed to survey reasons for and against becoming a cataloger, level of intent to pursue this branch of librarianship, and perception of the job market in the northeastern section of the United States. The administrator's version surveyed staff size of the respondent's library, including total staff and number of catalogers, hiring policy as applied to level of experience preferred, existence of a current search for catalogers, views on present supply of entry level catalogers, and their (administrators) perspectives on the future of cataloging.

Responses to questions were submitted to statistical analysis where the sample was adequate in number. The administrators' responses were perused and manually tabulated. Open-ended replies were individually considered and reported as applicable to specific items on the questionnaire.

CHAPTER IV.

DATA ANALYSIS

Questionnaires for students in Library Science were distributed to 636 persons enrolled in programs leading to the degree of Master of Library Science (MLS) in library schools accredited by the American Library Association. Of the 333 responses that were received by the researcher, three hundred were included in the EDD data editor of the SAS computer application program (see table 1). Ten of the respondents returned blank questionnaires and twenty-three responses arrived too late to be included in the computer file. The latter are considered in a narrative review of the open-ended comments made by the respondents.

The questionnaires were presented to the students during the summer session of the library schools. The summer enrollment is composed of part-time and full-time students, many of whom maintain employment in a school- related setting during the regular school year, i. e., September-to-June. Although this situation may be conducive to full-time studies in the summer the number of part-time students is twice that of full-time students (see table 2).

TABLE 1

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES

Questionnaires	N = 636	f	%*
Usable		300	47.2
Blank		10	1.6
Late		23	3.6
Total Received		333	52.4

* Based on 636 questionnaires mailed

TABLE 2

DISTRIBUTION OF REPONDENTS BY STATUS (FULL-TIME/PART-TIME)

Status	N = 300	f	%
Full-time		95	31.7
Part-time		205	68.3
Total		300	100.0

The respondents were asked to indicate how much of their graduate program had been completed. Of the three variables (each considered separately), the greatest frequency is in the group that has completed half or less than half of their program (see table 3). Almost an equal number of respondents attained over 50 percent completion or graduated by 1992. Summarily, while 41 % completed less than half of their graduate studies in Library Science, the "cumulative percent" of the other two variables is fifty-one, an amount that is not considered substantial.

When asked to indicate a first choice in type of position, the two most frequent responses were "Children/YA" and "Adult Reference" (see table 4). Not far behind the latter was the undifferentiated response of "Other" which was supplemented by narrative statements specifying what that "Other" choice signified. The figures representing "Children/YA librarianship"(103 or 34.7%) may be explained partially by the fact that the regular school session was not in progress during the summer when this questionnaire was distributed, this being the most opportune time for school-based personnel to pursue advance studies at the university. "Adult Reference" (93 or 31.3%), was only 3.3 percentage points behind "Children/YA," and appears to be a close second in frequency of preferred type of library position. Cataloging, the subject of this paper, is not revealed as a desirable alternative, and shares the same low percentage (5.4%) with "Archival/Preservation."

TABLE 3

DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENT RESPONDENTS BY AMOUNT OF MLS PROGRAM COMPLETED

Completion	N = 300	f	%
0 - 50%		123	41.0
51 - 95%		89	29.7
MLS by 92		88	29.3
Total		300	100.0

TABLE 4

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES BY FIRST PREFERENCE IN TYPE OF LIBRARY POSITION

Preference	N = 300	f	%
Children/YA		103	34.7
Adult Reference		93	31.3
Other		69	23.2
Cataloging		16	5.4
Archival/Preservation		16	5.4
Total		300	100.0

A hypothetical query was posed in the questionnaire to determine the extent of practical interest in cataloging or, at the other end of the spectrum, the degree of definite negativism. In table 5, a very small minority responded that they would accept a cataloging position if it were offered to them immediately. This number is almost identical to the percentage of those who responded that cataloging was their first preference in type of library positions (see table 4). Also, in table 5, there were 28% whose disinterest was so intense as to preclude acceptance of an offer of employment. Over half of the respondents did not totally reject such an offer, but stated that it would be considered only as a last resort. Slightly over fifteen percent indicated that an immediate offer of a cataloging position would be seriously considered.

It was further learned that only 17.3% intended to take additional cataloging courses (see table 6). This number is comparable to the 15.1% in table 5 who said that they would give serious consideration to an immediate job offer in cataloging. A definite distaste for this aspect of librarianship could also be suggested by the 82.7% who indicated no plans for further catalog training shown in table six.

TABLE 5

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES BY INTEREST IN IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE CATALOGING POSITION

Interest	N = 300	f	%
No Interest		84	28.0
Might Consider		153	51.2
Seriously Consider		45	15.1
Accept Immediately		17	5.7
Total		300	100.0

TABLE 6

DISTRIBUTION BY INTEREST IN ADVANCED CATALOG TRAINING

Interest	N = 300	f	%
Yes		51	17.3
No		244	82.7
Total		300	100.0

Table 7 indicates in frequency and percentage the factors influencing the respondents' disinterest in cataloging. The largest block of responses revealed that this type of work does not suit their personalities. "Uninteresting courses" attained the second highest frequency, but that was less than twenty percent. Very few, eleven and ten, (3.9% and 3.5%) believe that discouragement from professional librarians, or underactive recruitment, respectively, were responsible for their lack of enthusiasm for cataloging. Slightly more, but still not noteworthy, was the frequency of responses indicating a poor outlook.

Among those indicating an interest in cataloging, percentages close to or slightly over fifty were attributed to factors of "Relationship to Online Technology," "Enjoyment of Detail and Precision," and to "Other" reasons (see table 8). Of this small amount, 10.8%, it appears as if "Interesting Courses" or "Relation to Law" were apparently not motivating forces toward a career in cataloging. In table 8, the figures under the column heading "N" represent the total responses for each of the factors, regardless of their ranking by the respondent.

If all rankings (1 - 4) were weighted and taken into consideration, the order of frequency of preferences for cataloging would remain the same with respect to the first two categories. Using the weighted formula the rank order would be: 1. Enjoyment of Detail and Precision, 2. Relation to Online Technology, 3. Interesting Courses, 4. Relation to Law, and 5. Other.

TABLE 7

DISTRIBUTION BY REASONS AGINST A CATALOGING CAREER

Reasons	N = 283	f	%
Discouragement from Professional Librarians		11	3.9
Lack of Recruitment		10	3.5
Courses Not Interesting		55	19.4
Unsuited to Personality		161	56.9
Poor Outlook		27	9.5

Percentages do not total 100% because of the opportunity to respond to more than one option.

TABLE 8

DISTRIBUTION OF PRO-CATALOGING FACTORS RANKED NUMBER ONE

Factors	N	f	%
Interesting Courses	57	5	8.8
Relation to Law	51	1	2.0
Relation to Online Technology	69	32	46.4
Enjoy Detail	68	36	52.9
Other	17	10	58.8

Percentages do not total 100% because of the opportunity to respond to more than one option.

The student respondents, all from the northeast section of the United States and, more specifically, from library schools in the states of Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Ohio, were asked about their perceptions of the job market for catalogers in that same area. The researcher attempted to explore the frequencies of optimistic/pessimistic perceptions and the choice or rejection of a cataloging career. Simple distribution figures in table nine, including frequencies and percentages, reveal that there was no clear-cut perception evident among the students. In fact, the largest proportion of responses (101 or 36.33%) indicated an absence of any perception, negative or positive. The 10.43% of "Other" responses included comments on job opportunities in general.

As indicated in tables 3 and 10, students completing this questionnaire were at various stages in the extent of their completion of the MLS program. For reasons of expediency these levels were condensed into three groups: (1) 0 - 50% completion, (2) 51 - 95% completion, and (3) those who already had or expected to have graduated in 1992.

In how many instances did this factor (extent of program completed) have any impact on their choice of library specialty? Is cataloging an option that would be considered only by students who had taken most of their courses and could then use some comparative means to make a final decision? Were beginning students more likely to choose an area such as

TABLE 9

DISTRIBUTION BY PERCEPTIONS OF JOB MARKET
FOR CATALOGERS IN THE NORTHEAST

Perceptions N = 278	f	%
Shortage of Catalogers	50	18.00
Shortage of Entry Level Catalogers	50	18.00
Ratio of Jobs to Applicants is Equal	39	14.00
Shortage of Jobs but I'll Wait	9	3.24
Have No Perception	101	36.33
Other	29	10.43
Total	278	100.0

Children/YA Services or Reference since they had already had exposure to them in a non-professional capacity throughout their childhood, youth, and undergraduate studies? The findings in table 10 do not provide an answer to these questions. The Chi Square value is 14.545 and the probability factor, 0.069, is beyond the point of significance; 27% of the cells had counts less than five.

There were two other attempts to discover whether the extent of program completion had any significant relationship to the other variable. Table 11 shows the results of comparing the extent of program completion with interest in an immediately available cataloging position. A possible consideration was whether there would be more graduates or near-graduates ready to accept an immediately offered position.

In light of the economic situation during the summer of 1992, the perceptions of the library students regarding the job market for catalogers were considered. Data was gathered illustrating how many of the students in each of the three levels of program completion perceived the need for catalogers. Table 12 indicates these facts, and, in addition, reveals that the greatest amount (frequencies and percentages) had no perception at all, and amongst the three groups of students, the new students had the least number of perceptions, with the other two groups, in ascending order, having more.

TABLE 10

RELATIONSHIP OF PROGRAM COMPLETED AND CHOICE OF LIBRARY SPECIALTY

Library Specialty	Extent of Program Completed							
	0 - 50%		51 - 95%		MLS by '92		Total	
N = 297	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Adult Reference	43	14.48	17	18.28	33	35.48	93	100.00
Cataloging	8	50.00	5	31.25	3	18.75	16	100.00
Children/YA	44	42.72	36	34.95	23	22.33	103	100.00
Archival/Preservation	5	31.25	5	31.25	6	37.50	16	100.00
Other	20	28.99	26	37.68	23	33.33	69	100.00
Total	120		89		88		297	100.00

Chi Square Value = 14.545
P = .06
df = 8
Sample Size = 297

Warning: 27% of the cells have expected counts less than 5. Chi Square may not be a valid test.

TABLE 11

CROSS TABULATION OF PROGRAM COMPLETED AND INTEREST IN IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE CATALOGING POSITION

	Extent of Program Completed							
Interest	0 - 50%		51 - 95%		MLS by '92		Total	
N = 299	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
No Interest	30	35.71	28	33.33	26	30.95	84	100.00
Might Consider	64	41.83	46	30.07	43	28.10	153	100.00
Seriously Consider	20	44.44	10	22.22	15	33.33	45	100.00
Accept Immediately	8	47.06	5	29.41	4	23.53	17	100.00
Total	122		89		88		299	100.00

Chi Square Value = 2.698
P = 0.846
df = 6
Sample Size = 299

TABLE 12

CROSS TABULATION OF PROGRAM COMPLETED AND PERCEPTION OF JOB MARKET FOR CATALOGERS IN THE NORTHEAST

	Extent of Program Completed							
Perception	0 - 50%		51 - 95%		MLS by '92		Total	
N = 278	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Shortage of Catalogers	22	44.00	10	20.00	18	36.00	50	17.99
Shortage of Entry Level Catalogers	16	32.00	18	36.00	16	32.00	50	17.99
Ratio of Jobs to Applicants about Equal	18	46.15	11	28.21	10	25.64	39	14.03
Shortage of Jobs but I'll Wait	3	33.33	2	22.22	4	44.44	9	3.24
Have No Perception	49	48.51	31	30.69	21	20.79	101	36.33
Other	4	13.79	13	44.83	12	41.38	29	10.43
Total	111	39.93	85	30.58	82	29.50	278	100.00

Another timely consideration was the degree of interest in an immediately available cataloging position by respondents who had indicated their first choice among types of library positions, i. e., Adult Reference, Cataloging, Children/YA, Archival/Preservation, and "Others." Would those whose first choice was cataloging overwhelmingly, immediately, accept such a position if it were offered; whereas, would there be less enthusiastic responses to such an offer among those contemplating Children/YA Services for their career choice?

Table 13 reveals a partial response to the first question, but stated in negative syntax. None of the student respondents who selected cataloging as their first choice indicated "No Interest" nor would they merely consider an immediately available offered position. Conversely, only one individual (5.88%) of all those who would accept such an offer was among those who were going into Children/YA Services. This percentage is very similar to that of the proportion of respondents among the total sample who were anxious to accept this immediate job offer (5.72%). A relationship between the variables, i.e., degree of interest in the immediate job offering and choice of library position, is revealed in the Chi Square value of 115.902 and the probability factor of 0.000. However, a warning is issued that 35% of the cells have expected counts less than five, and that Chi Square may not be a valid test.

TABLE 13

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHOICE IN TYPE OF LIBRARY POSITION AND INTEREST IN IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE CATALOGING POSITION

Interest in Available Cataloging Position	Type of Library Position Preferred											
N = 297	Adult Ref.		Cat.		Child./ YA		Arch/ Pres.		Other		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
No Interest	23	24.73	0	0.00	38	36.89	2	12.50	20	28.99	83	27.95
Might Consider	56	60.22	0	0.00	57	55.34	9	56.25	31	44.93	153	51.52
Seriously Consider	11	11.83	7	43.75	7	6.80	3	18.75	16	23.19	44	14.81
Accept Immediately	3	3.23	9	56.25	1	0.97	2	12.50	2	2.90	17	5.72
Total	93	31.31	16	5.39	103	34.68	16	5.39	69	23.23	297	100.00

Chi Square Value = 15.902
P = 0.000
df = 12
Sample Size = 297.
Warning: 35% of the cells have counts less than five. Chi Square may not be a valid test.

While library students were responding to one questionnaire form another version had been sent to twenty-nine administrators of libraries in cities in the Northeast sector of the United States. Seventeen (58.62%) returned and completed the questionnaires. Twelve of the seventeen (70.59%) indicated that they are directors, and five (29.41%) of the responding administrators are department heads.

Being administrators, an important aspect of their position would include human relations and, more specifically, the hiring of new staff. In table 14, the distribution of their respective roles in the hiring process is displayed. The most sizable segment of the respondents (58.82%) stated that they had complete authority to hire.

The size of the professional library staff, including catalogers, was also surveyed and is shown in table 15. The distribution figures indicated that only two (11.76%) had twenty-one or more professional librarians and the largest proportion of libraries represented by the responding administrators (64.71%) maintained a professional cataloging staff of one to three persons. Four libraries had no catalogers, but, in the comments, two of the latter were libraries that were part of a larger library system in which the cataloging department and its staff were at a different location. Owing to the guaranteed anonymity of the responses, cross-referencing the component with the central processing center could not be performed. One of the administrators represented a library with seven to nine professional catalogers.

TABLE 14

DISTRIBUTION BY ROLES IN THE HIRING PROCESS

Roles	N = 17	f	%
Complete Authority		10	8.62
Offer Recommend. to Indiv. Having Authority		3	17.65
Member of Committee Having Authority		2	11.76
Member of Committee Making Recommend.		2	11.76
Total		17	100.00

TABLE 15

DISTRIBUTION BY SIZE OF PROFESSIONAL LIBRARIAN STAFF

Interest	N = 17	f	%
1 - 10		12	70.59
11 - 20		3	17.65
21 - 30		2	11.76
Over 30		0	0.00
Total		17	100.00

Once again, the role of the administrator in gauging the need for catalogers was explored via several items in the questionnaire. One of the commonly used means for locating professional staff is a search. However, not all libraries were conducting a search, the reasons ranging from "Financial" (6 or 35.29%) to "sufficient number of current staff" (8 or 47.06%). Two did not answer the question and one indicated "Other." Of those administrators who were looking for new cataloging staff, what were their problems, if any, in finding same? Six (35.29%) replied that they were encountering difficulty, two or 11.76% indicated "N/A" and six (35.29%) did not respond to this question.

It was considered a definite possibility that the job qualifications and/or job description could be a factor in finding that staff. Table 16 indicates in frequencies and percentages the distribution of experience requirements for a professional cataloging position as stated in the administrators' responses. None of the respondents indicated that they expected four or more years' experience. Less than 30% of the respondents would accept applicants with less than one year's experience, but the same percentage would be willing to hire entry-level catalogers along with experienced ones. Slightly less than 25% of the administrators did not respond to this question and three administrators noted "Other" in answer to Item 5, regarding the hiring policy.

TABLE 16

DISTRIBUTION BY EXPERIENCE QUALIFICATIONS

Qualifications N = 17	f	%
Four or More Years	0	0.00
One Year	5	29.41
Accept Entry Level Applicants	5	29.41
Others	3	17.65
No Response	4	23.53
Total	17	100.00

The issue of supply and demand for catalogers was further addressed in requesting the respondents' views on the sufficiency of the current number of MLS graduates. There were no administrators who believed that there was a surplus supply of new catalogers. Ten others responded in comparative quantitative terms, six (35.29%) believing that there were adequate numbers; and 23.53% did not think there were enough new catalogers coming out of library schools.

One of the most interesting facets of the survey was the respondents' perspective of the cataloger's job. To what extent does the classic image of librarians performing original cataloging still exist? Table 17 shows that among the sample of seventeen, eight (47.06%) libraries maintained between five to ten percent original cataloging and only one performed up to fifty percent original cataloging.

If there is a need for more catalogers, what will their role be in the future? If there is an abundant or excessive number of prospective catalogers in library schools what will they do when they graduate? Table 18 provides a few figures on administrators' perceptions of the cataloger's job in ten years from the present. Seven (41.18%) envision the position as being almost totally computer-based with 0 - 5% original cataloging. Almost 25% of the respondents visualized new creative applications in cataloging; none of them expected this specialty to disappear.

TABLE 17

DISTRIBUTION BY EXTENT OF ORIGINAL CATALOGING

Extent	N = 17	f	%
0 - 4%		1	5.88
5 - 10%		8	47.06
25%		2	11.76
50%		1	5.88
Other		3	17.65
No Response		2	11.76
Total		17	100.00

TABLE 18

DISTRIBUTION BY ADMINISTRATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF CATALOGING IN TEN YEARS

Perceptions	N = 17	f	%
Computer-based		7	41.18
Supervisory/Administrative		3	17.65
New Creative Applications		4	23.53
No Change		3	17.65
Fade-out		0	0.00
No Response		0	0.00
Total		17	100.00

CHAPTER V.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Prior to considering the findings relating to the subject of this paper, i.e., the need for professional catalogers, a preliminary digression is presented regarding the response to the questionnaires and the individuals who responded to them. As seen from the data presented in the previous chapter, the overall response was not substantial, i.e., just a simple majority of the total distributed. In view of the fact that it was during the summer that these questionnaires were distributed, some considerations are addressed here.

Summer vacation schedules of library administrators may have coincided with the arrival of the questionnaires. Library students not enrolled in courses during the summer and/or who did not visit their library school and mailboxes during that time would not have received the questionnaire. Upon return to their library positions or to classes at the end of summer, it is possible that a number of prospective respondents assumed that it was too late to send in the responses even though no deadline date had been noted in the cover letter or questionnaire.

The intent had been to provide as convenient and burden-free an instrument as possible, thereby hopefully increasing

the prospects for a sizable rate of response. To the 340 respondents (students and administrators) who completed and returned their questionnaires, this study is indebted.

In addition to answering the structured questions the respondents provided open-ended commentary that supplemented the information gleaned from the multi-choice items. These statements, by their personal reflections, helped to clarify some data results which were not conclusive.

As mentioned in the previous chapter there were more than twice as many part-time students enrolled in the 1992 summer sessions of the library science programs as there were full-time students. Being graduate programs, the enrollees follow a schedule that is in harmony with their job, whether they teach in the public schools, as do many of the respondents mentioned in the comment section, or hold positions in a library. In the case of the former, although they may have the whole summer away from their positions, they may only be interested in courses in Childrens/YA Services, and the number of courses of that nature available may only comprise enough credits to qualify for part-time status.

The impact of the level of program completion on the responses to the items on the questionnaire brings forth a few points. Having completed most of their MLS program did not lead more library school students to consider cataloging; rather the reverse occurred, i.e., the interest dwindled with the level of program completion. The same regression of interest occurs in the area of "Children/YA" librarianship

although the number indicating this choice is greater at each of the three levels of program completion. Also, of some surprise to the researcher, is the disinterest in acceptance of an immediately available cataloging position, especially by those who were closely approaching graduation. However, as noted previously, most of the students are of part-time status and already hold positions of employment. Therefore, the financial need to secure a job may not be significant enough to transcend an overwhelming interest or disinterest in a particular field.

At this point the question of "why" or "why not" may be applied to such a negligible interest in the field of cataloging. The outstanding proportion of respondents who did not want to be catalogers felt that their personalities were not compatible with the characteristics which they perceived to be part of the job; and, according to the responses of the individuals who would be interested in cataloging, the two factors that were most responsible for their interest are an enjoyment of detail and cataloging's relation to online technology. One individual expressed such strong sentiment against this type of job to the extent that it would precipitate erratic behaviors upon being released from the constraints of such a job at the end of a workday.

One of the most outstanding examples of distaste for cataloging to appear in the responses is the rejection of further catalog training. Although comments under this item were almost nil, remarks entered elsewhere on the questionnaire,

but relevant here, suggest that several students did not benefit from the basic cataloging course and were therefore discouraged from following through with advanced courses.

As the focal point of this study, the job market for catalogers was addressed several times in the questionnaires, both to the administrators and to the students. Understandably the students newest to the program have fewer perceptions concerning this job market, and the other two groups in ascending order of their level of program completion had a better idea of this situation. Nevertheless, among all responses by all three levels of program completion, those answering "no perceptions" are more than twice the proportion of any single perception. From the comments it appears as if many respondents who are not interested in this specialty did not make any inquiries into the employment picture for catalogers. A few others state that they do not have enough knowledge and information on the subject to have a perception. Several other respondents believe that there is a shortage of cataloging positions, but that they require skills and experience that an entry level cataloger would not possess, thereby producing a shortage of entry level cataloging positions.

In the prior chapter it was noted that twenty-three responses arrived too late for statistical analysis. They were reviewed and the responses to the items provide results that are similar to those discussed above. Very slight variations include a preponderance of students who selected adult reference as a first choice as opposed to the near equal ratio

of Children/YA and adult reference choices among the 300 statistically analyzed responses. The respondents in this small group were, on the other hand, more evenly divided as to a complete rejection of an immediately available cataloger's job and whether such an offer might be accepted.

From the responding administrators it is found that although less than one-third expect at least one year of experience, the same amount would also accept an entry level cataloger. The responding administrators in this survey are representative of small libraries with proportionately small professional librarian/cataloging staffs. There were no substantial searches in progress; neither were they encountering any problems of note in finding any needed catalogers. In other words, they have what they need at the moment. This is not surprising in view of the economic climate in the Northeast in the summer of 1992. Additionally, these administrators do not believe that there is an overabundance of entry level catalogers graduating from library schools, but neither do they believe that original cataloging will comprise more than five percent of a cataloger's job in ten years from now, any more than it does so now. Therefore, it appears as if this one skill (original cataloging) which does require a professional level will mean less of a need for MLS catalogers, and perhaps even less so, for those at the entry level.

Recommendations for Future Research

For future studies it would be advantageous to sample a population of library administrators and library students in other geographic areas and thereby develop comparison figures on the need for professional catalogers that would be helpful to library students about to enter the job market.

A parallel study, using a large sample of library administrators (similar to the number of library students in this research project) is recommended for substantial correlation analysis. A task force, such as that instituted in 1988, or several independent studies would be most valuable in such an endeavor.

APPENDIX 1

School of Library and Information Science
(216) 672-2782
Fax 216-672-7965

Kent STATE UNIVERSITY
P. O. Box 5190, Kent, Ohio 44242-0001

RE: STATUS OF CATALOGERS IN THE FIELD OF LIBRARIANSHIP

June 22, 1992

Dear Library Administrator:

The enclosed questionnaire is part of a survey for my research paper as partial fulfillment toward the requirements for a Master's Degree in Library and Information Science. This survey is an effort to determine whether there is a current shortage of catalogers in general and, if so, in which specific level of capacity. Shortages of catalogers have been reported in library literature. The question at hand is whether the shortage is for all professional catalogers, for the experienced professional cataloger, or for those just emerging from library schools.

To gain insight into this problem it appeared necessary to determine hiring practices, employment statistics and perspectives of library administrators. Your position as administrator together with your experience in the field provide the perspective needed for analyzing this comprehensive problem. Although your participation is critical to this project, it is of course voluntary and you may withdraw at any time, or should you decide not to return the questionnaire there would be no penalty of any kind. There is no risk involved, and your anonymity is assured.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study you may contact me at 216-688-7768, or my adviser, Dr. Lois Buttlar, at 216-672-2782. If you have questions concerning the rules for research, please contact Dr. Eugene Wenninger at the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (216-672-2070).

Thank you very much for your cooperation. A self-addressed stamped envelope is enclosed for your convenience. The results of the study will be available upon request.

Sincerely,

Renee Schwarz

Renee Schwarz
Graduate Student
3828 Oneida St.
Stow, Ohio 44224

APPENDIX 2

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ADMINISTRATORS

Please place an X on the line next to your response.

1. What is your position at this library?

   _ Director

   _ Assistant Director

   _ Human Resources Director

   _ Department Head

   _ Other (please specify)_____

2. What is your role in the hiring process?

   _ Complete authority to hire new employees

   _ Offer recommendations to individual or committee in charge of hiring.

   _ Member of committee which has total responsibility for hiring

   _ Member of committee which makes recommendations

3. How many professional catalogers do you currently employ?

   _ 0 _ 1-3 _ 4-6 _ 7-9

   _ other (please explain)_____

4. If not currently conducting a search for catalogers, is the reason:

   _ financial

   _ current professional cataloging staff is sufficient

   _ other (please explain)_____

5. In searching for professional catalogers, your policy is to hire:

   _ only those individuals with 4 or more years experience

   _ persons with at least one year's experience

   _ entry level catalogers (recent MLS graduates with no experience) in addition to those with cataloging experience

   _ other (please explain)_____

6. In your professional opinion, library schools are turning out:

_ an adequate number of professional catalogers

_ an inadequate number of professional catalogers

_ an overabundance of professional catalogers

7. In your current or most recent search (within last three years) did you encounter difficulty in finding that cataloging staff?

_ yes

_ no

8. How many professional librarians are employed at your library?

_ 1-10

_ 11-20

_ 21-30

_ over 30

9. How much of your library's cataloging is original cataloging?

_ 0%

_ 5%-10%

_ 25%

_ 50%

_ other (please explain)_____

10. How do you envision the cataloger position in ten years from now?

_ almost totally computer-based, with 0%-5% original cataloging

_ almost totally supervisory-administrative in nature, with 0%-5% of work involvement with cataloging (original or copy)

_ development of new creative applications to be used in cataloging

_ no significant change

_ almost total fadeout of position, with professional librarians from other departments/functions performing cataloging work

APPENDIX 3

School of Library and Information Science
(216) 672-2782
Fax 216-672-7965

Kent STATE UNIVERSITY
P O Box 5190, Kent, Ohio 44242-0001

RE: STATUS OF CATALOGERS IN THE FIELD OF LIBRARIANSHIP

June 22, 1992

Dear Library Science Student:

The enclosed questionnaire is part of a survey for my research paper for a Master's Degree in Library and Information Science. This survey is an effort to determine whether there is a current shortage of catalogers in general and, if so, in which specific level of capacity.

Shortages of catalogers have been reported in the library literature. The question at hand is whether the shortage is for all professional catalogers, for the experienced professional cataloger, or for those just emerging from library schools.
To gain insight into this problem it appeared necessary to find out how current library science students feel about this aspect of librarianship, e.g., is it a serious career option or the last in a ranking of library career specializations.

As a Master's student in a school maintaining a reputation for quality and innovation, your perceptions are important to this study. Although your participation is critical to this project, it is of course voluntary, and if you should decide not to return the questionnaire there would be no penalty of any kind. In addition, you can cease participation at any time without penalty. There is no risk involved, and your anonymity is assured.

If you have any questions about this study you may contact me at 216-688-7768, or my adviser, Dr. Lois Buttlar at 216-672-2782. If you have any questions concerning the rules for research at Kent State University, please contact Dr. Eugene Wenninger at the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (216-672-2070).

Thank you very much for your cooperation. A self-addressed stamped envelope is enclosed for your convenience. The results of the study will be available upon request.

Sincerely,

Renee Schwarz

Renee Schwarz
Graduate Student
3828 Oneida St.
Stow, Ohio 44224

APPENDIX 4

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LIBRARY SCIENCE STUDENTS

Please circle one letter to indicate your response to each question.

1. What is your student status in this library school program?

   a. full-time

   b. part-time

2. Approximately how much of the MLS program have you completed?

   a. 0-50%

   b. 51-95%

   c. Expect to receive MLS degree in December, 1992.

3. What type of library position would be your first choice, immediately following graduation?

   a. adult reference

   b. cataloging

   c. childen and/or youth services

   d. archival/preservation

   e. other, (please specify)_____

4. How interested would you be if a cataloging position were offerred to you immediately after graduation?

   a. no interest at all

   b. I might consider it if there were no other alternatives.

   c. I would seriously consider it along with other firm offers of a similar cataloging position.

   d. I would apply for it immediately.

5. Do you intend to pursue additional catalog training (beyond core requirements) while still a student in this library program?

   a. yes

   b. no

6. If you have no desire to be a cataloger, what factors were influential in this conclusion.

   a. discouragement from professional librarians

   b. lack of or minimal effort in recruitment

   c. courses not interesting

   d. that type of work is not suitable to my personality

   e. poor outlook for future

7. If you would like to be a cataloger, please rank your reasons, 1-4 with 1 being the most important.

   _ interesting courses

   _ evaluation by use of AACR2 has some similarity to law

   _ enjoy its relationship to online technology

   _ enjoy work that is detail-oriented and demanding of precision

   _ other, please explain_____

8. What is your perception of the job market for catalogers in the North East section of the United States?

   a. There is a shortage of catalogers.

   b. There is a shortage of entry level catalogers, i.e. recent graduates with an M.L.S. degree.

   c. The ratio of jobs to applicants is about equal.

   d. There is a shortage of jobs, but I want to be a cataloger so much that I'll get in line and wait.

   e. other_____

ENDNOTES

[1]"CCS Task Force on Education and Recruitment for Cataloging Report, June 1986, RTSD Newsletter 11 (1986); quoted in Janet Swan Hill, "Recruitment for Cataloging," in Librarians for the New Millenium, eds. William E. Moen and Kathleen M. Heim, (Chicago: American Library Association, 1988), 26-28, 34-36.

[2]Kenneth Furuta, "The Impact of Automation on Professional Catalogers," Information Technology and Libraries 9 (September 1990): 242-251.

[3]Janet Swan Hill, "Stalking the Elusive Cataloger," American Libraries 20 (May 1989): 458-460.

[4]Hill, "Recruitment," 26.

[5]Thomas M. Gaughan, "A Job Seekers' Market for Librarians," American Libraries 19 (March 1988): 181.

[6]Robert P. Holley, "The Future of Catalogers and Cataloging," The Journal of Academic Librarianship 7 (May 1981) 90; Janet Swan Hill, "The Literature of Description and Cataloging, 1988," Library Resources and Technical Services 33 (July 1989): 265; Laurie E. Smith, "Where Are All the Entry Level Catalogers?" Journal of Library Administration 6 (Summer 1985): 34.

[7]Holley, "Future," 90.

[8]Lizbeth J. Bishoff, "Who Says We Don't Need Catalogers"? American Libraries 18 (September 1987): 694.

[9]Mary K. Bolin, "Make A Quick Decision in (Almost) All Cases: Our Perennial Crisis in Cataloging," The Journal of Academic Librarianship 16 (January 1991): 358-359.

[10]Ibid. 360.

[11]Judith B. Barnett, "Bibliographic Networks and the Cataloger Crisis," The Journal of Academic Librarianship 14 (May 1988): 100.

[12]Janet Swan Hill, "Wanted Good Catalogers," American Libraries 16 (November 1985): 730; quoted in Judith B. Barnett, "Bibliographic Networks and the Cataloger Crisis" The Journal of Academic Librarianship 14 (May 1988): 100.

[13]Janet Swan Hill, "The Literature of Description and Cataloging, 1988," Library Resources and Technical Services 33 (July 1989): 265.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Herbert S. White and Sarah L. Mort, "The Accredited Library Education Program As Preparation for Professional Library Work," The Library Quarterly 60 (July 1990): 204.

[16]Janet Swan Hill, "Wanted Good Catalogers," American Libraries 16 (November 1985): 729.

[17]Laurie E. Smith, "Where Are the Entry Level Catalogers?" Journal of Library Administration 6 (Summer 1985): 33.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Nancy A. Van House, "Projections of the Supply of Librarians," The Library Quarterly 54, no. 4 (October 1984): 368-395; quoted in Laurie E. Smith, "Where Are the Entry Level Catalogers," Journal of Library Administration 6 (Summer 1985): 34.

[20]ALA Survey of Librarian Salaries, 1984, Mary Jo Lynch, Project Director, (Chicago: American Library Association, 1984), quoted in Laurie E. Smith, "Where Are the Entry Level Catalogers," Journal of Library Administration 6 (Summer 1985): 34.

[21]ALA Survey of Librarian Salaries, 1991 Mary Jo Lynch, Project Director, (Chicago: Office for Research and Office for Library Personnel Resources, 1991): 27.

[22]Smith, "Where," 34.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Patricia A. Eskoz, "The Cataloging Librarian--Change or Status Quo, Results of a Survey of Academic Libraries," Library Resources and Technical Services 34 (July 1990): 380-392.

[25]Kenneth Furuta, "The Impact of Automation on Professional Catalogers," Information Technology and Libraries 9 (September 1990): 249.

[26]"CCS Task Force on Education and Recruitment for Cataloging Report, June, 1986," RTSD Newsletter 11, no.7 (1986); quoted in Furuta, "Impact," 245-246.

[27]Furuta, "Impact," 249.

[28]Thomas M. Gaughan, "A Job Seekers' Market for Librarians," American Libraries 19 (March 1988): 181.

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